

# COVID-19 Update

## May 20: Vaccination in 12- to 15-Year-Old Children, Co-administration With Other Vaccines, and New CDC Masking Guidelines for Fully Vaccinated Individuals

*Today's issue provides information about COVID-19 vaccination in 12- to 15-year-old children and co-administration of the vaccine with other immunizations. It also includes an update on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) masking guidelines for fully vaccinated individuals.*

### **VACCINATION IN 12-15 YEAR-OLD CHILDREN**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) extended the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use in children between the ages of 12 and 15. This is an important step toward controlling the spread of the SARS CoV-2 virus, protecting children, and helping families and communities return to normal.

Significant improvements in vaccine technology greatly contributed to the rapid development of the COVID-19 vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccines underwent rigorous evaluation prior to the EUA and have been shown to be safe and very effective. Clinical trials conducted in the 12-15-year-old age group demonstrate equivalent or better immune responses to the COVID-19 vaccine as compared with individuals 16 to 25 years of age. The dosing of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in 12-15-year-olds is the same dosing used in adults. The side effects seen in trials are similar to that in adults, but in many cases were milder and resolved within 24 to 48 hours.

Even though the mortality rate associated with SARS CoV-2 in children is lower than in adults, children can experience severe illness with infection. Since the start of the pandemic, more than 3.8 million children have been infected with SARS-CoV-2, resulting in more than 14,000 hospitalizations. Some of these children have become seriously ill and continue to experience long-term symptoms. Vaccinating children with the COVID-19 vaccine will provide them with the protection to resume the activities that are fundamental to their health and development.

In June, Northwestern Medicine will begin offering COVID-19 vaccination to children as young as 12. Details will be provided as they become available. Information and tip sheets regarding patient vaccination at NM are available in the [Patient Vaccine Toolkit](#) on Physician Forum and [NM Interactive](#) (login required), and on the [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) at [nm.org/covid-19](https://nm.org/covid-19).

### **COVID-19 VACCINE CO-ADMINISTRATION WITH OTHER VACCINES**

COVID-19 vaccines were previously recommended to be administered alone, with a minimum interval of 14 days before or after administration of other vaccines. This was out of an abundance

of caution and not due to any known safety or immunogenicity concerns. However, substantial data have now been collected regarding the safety of COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized by the FDA. Although data are not available for COVID-19 vaccines administered simultaneously with other vaccines, extensive experience with non-COVID-19 vaccines has demonstrated that immunogenicity and adverse event profiles are generally similar when vaccines are administered simultaneously as when they are administered alone.

COVID-19 vaccines may now be administered without regard to timing of other vaccinations. This includes simultaneous administration of COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines on the same day, as well as co-administration within 14 days. If multiple vaccines are administered at a single visit, administer each injection in a different injection site. For adolescents and adults, the deltoid muscle can be used for more than one intramuscular injection.

For additional information regarding each of the COVID-19 vaccines, including physician tip sheets and protocols, please visit the Vaccine Toolkit on [Physician Forum](#) and [NMI](#) (login required). Information for patients is available in the COVID-19 Resource Center at [nm.org/covid-19](https://nm.org/covid-19).

### **NEW CDC MASKING GUIDELINES FOR FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS**

On May 16, the CDC [updated its guidelines for masking for fully vaccinated individuals](#). Those who are fully vaccinated can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing indoors and outdoors, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.

**Please note that the following information does not apply to healthcare settings. All NM policies regarding universal masking, physical distancing and on-site meeting capacities remain in place.** At NM facilities, physicians and staff should continue to follow the [PPE guidelines](#) posted on Physician Forum and [NMI](#).

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has issued a health alert providing additional details on the application of the new CDC guidelines. An exception to the revised CDC guidelines applies to certain crowded indoor spaces such as buses and planes, and in congregate settings such as hospitals, homeless shelters and jails; masking is still required for vaccinated individuals in these settings.

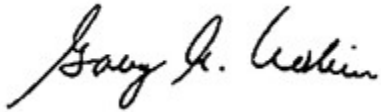
### **Recommendations for vaccinated individuals**

- Individuals must continue to follow guidelines at their workplace and local businesses.
- U.S. travelers will still be required to wear a mask on planes, buses, trains and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within or outside of the U.S., and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.
- Individuals should continue to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19, especially if they have been exposed to someone who is sick. Those with symptoms of COVID-19 should get tested, stay home and isolate from others.
- Guidance for healthcare settings remains unchanged; see [Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination](#).

For additional information to support patient discussions, the CDC has created an easy-to-follow, color-coded [Choosing Safer Activities](#) tip sheet, which can be printed and posted. Information about masking and other safety practices at NM is available for physicians and employees on the [PPE guidelines](#) page on Physician Forum and [NMI](#), and for patients on the [Patient Safety During COVID-19 page](#) at [nm.org/safety](https://nm.org/safety).

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With the release of the new CDC mask guidelines, please remind your patients who are not fully vaccinated, that they should continue to wear a mask and physically distance. In addition, continue to encourage them to get vaccinated.



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